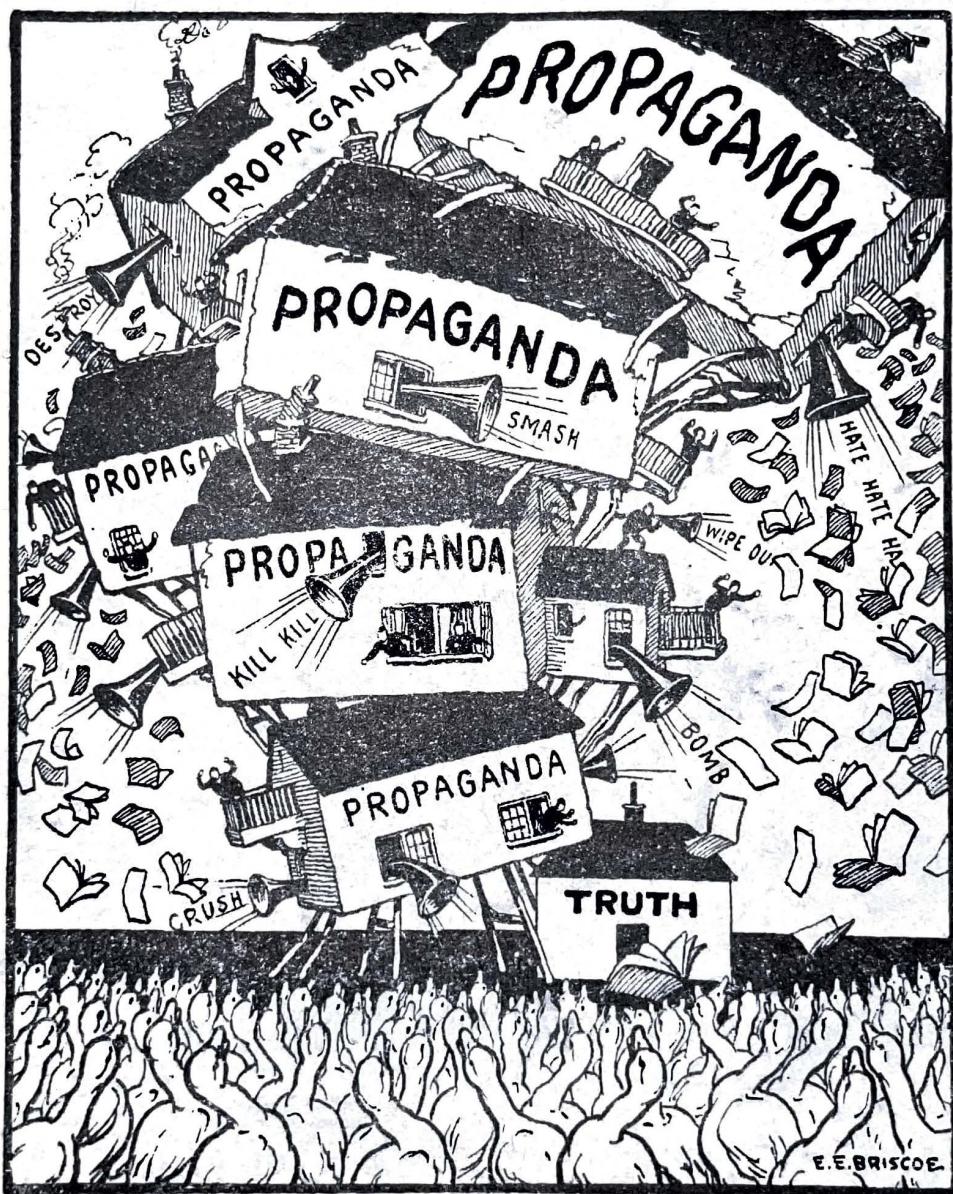


PROPAGANDA FOR PROPER GESE



THE DUKE OF BEDFORD

Price TWOPENCE
THE STRICKLAND PRESS
104 George Street, Glasgow, C.1
1942

Propaganda for Proper Geese

This war, to a more outstanding degree than any other, is a war of financiers and fools, though most people, on the Allied side at any rate, do not as yet see very clearly how financiers come into it.

Financiers, however, brought about the war because the economic system which they control through the creation and issue of money is liable to break down from lack of consumer purchasing power unless from time to time new money is brought into existence by bank loans for the making of armaments or the waging of wars.

Even if the will to help had been present in the minds of the politicians, the financiers' defective money system would have proved a barrier against effective action for the relief of the economic needs of the Axis Powers whose leaders were enabled to get the support of their peoples for war by pointing out the injustice under which they laboured as "Have Nots in a world of selfish "Haves."

Financiers also desired war as a means of overthrowing their rivals and consolidating still further their immense power. Their "rivals" were to be found both on the Axis side and on the side of the Allies. Hitler, although the financiers had given him some support during the period of temporary nervousness about the trend of events in Russia, soon began to get out of hand and Mussolini and the Japanese leaders were inclined to act in a similar way. Hitler not only engaged in barter trade which meant no discount profits for bankers arranging Bills of Exchange, but he even went so far as to declare that a country's real wealth consisted in its ability to produce

goods; nor, when men and materials were available, would he ever allow lack of money to be an obstacle in the way of any project which he considered to be in his country's interests. This was rank heresy in the eyes of the financiers of Britain and America, a heresy which, if allowed to spread, would blow the gaff on the whole financial racket. In Britain and America money came first and goods second, and it had been customary to destroy goods even though people were still in need, and to cut down production in the interests of the money-creating money-lenders whose power and profits, derived from loans, were best secured by keeping money in short supply. Hitler and his imitators must therefore be suppressed!

On the Allied side, the financiers had rather oddly-assorted rivals—great landowners, certain great industrialists, and freedom-loving men. The great landowners could be crushed out of existence by war taxation. Such of the great-industrialists as were not specially favoured by the financiers could also be overthrown by taxation and by the ruin of their businesses in war; while freedom-loving men, who might be quite humble individuals in the economic sense, could be turned into robots by grinding all love and hope of freedom out of them under the Juggernaut wheels of the War-State regimenting and controlling them at every turn and planning still further regimentation even when the war was over.

The war is also a war of fools, i.e. of people who have never learned to think intelligently for themselves, and propaganda is the method by which fools are managed and exploited and their folly maintained and increased. Lord Soulbury, a former President of the Board of Education, said recently: "So long as some ("nearly all" would have been even more true!) of the newspapers appear to be written by the half-educated for the uneducated, we shall continue to have what has been described as a 'newspaper-reading, advertisement-believing, propaganda-swallowing, demagogue-led man' who makes modern democracy the farce it is."

The Archbishop of York has given it as his opinion that of all forms of government undoubtedly the most

dangerous is an uneducated democracy, and an uneducated democracy is what we have in Britain to-day, for, whether they have received their education at famous public schools or at Board schools, most British citizens seem to have been crammed with facts by their teachers but have never learned to think for themselves.

A friend of the writer's recently described even the more intelligent of his acquaintances as being "inches deep in propaganda" and as not *wanting* to know anything which upset the ideas which the propaganda agencies had poured into their minds. Certainly one of the most disheartening features of the war is the almost unbelievable readiness displayed even by people who at one time appeared really intelligent, to swallow propaganda of more than doubtful truth and accuracy. One does indeed wonder what will happen when the time comes for them to be compelled to realise the way in which they have been deceived!

In war-time people are inclined to form their opinions not by using their reason but by giving way to their feelings, and in this they are constantly encouraged by the propaganda agencies which seek continually to arouse their indignation, their hatred, their fear, their pity, or their love of their country.

"My country right or wrong" is, indeed, a typical example of the spirit of war propaganda. Good and bad ideas are here mingled and, because of the confusion, the general result is commonly more bad than good. If we bring reason to bear on this saying and examine it carefully, we find that the good element consists in the notion that we should love and serve our country in spite of her faults, as we should love and serve a friend; the bad element consists in the idea that we should be blind to our country's faults and to the faults of our Government and support the latter even when it is, in reality, harming the country by doing wrong or telling lies. This is foolishness, for we show wise love of friends and country by supporting and encouraging them when they are doing right and by trying to restrain them when they are doing wrong, even if they dislike our protest or our criticism. We can, indeed, hardly do a more deadly injury to those of whom we are

fond than by encouraging them in wrong-doing, or even by failing to remonstrate. This holds good even in cases where it is not possible to keep our protest or exposure private and enemies may jeer, for it is far, far better to make the protest or exposure than to allow error and wrong-doing to continue, perhaps with grave danger to others besides those who are primarily concerned.

In war-time, because of the strain under which people are living and the sacrifices which they are obliged to make, it seems to be very difficult for them not to give way to the temptation to believe about their own country, or the enemy, or the course of the war, the things which are most pleasant to believe and which give them the greatest satisfaction. To do this is to obtain some relief from strain and to feel that the sacrifices which are being made are really worth while. It also helps them to remain on good terms with all their friends and acquaintances who are thinking the same way.

With some persons love of their country and of their fellow-countrymen is a very real thing indeed. With others, though they are not aware of it, their patriotism is largely self-centred. They like to feel that their country is always right, because they like to feel that *they* are always right and they have identified themselves with their country. In the same way they like to feel that the newspaper-writers and the politicians whom they believe are fine and truthful men because it would hurt their pride to think that they had allowed themselves to be misled by fools and rogues. Anyone, therefore, who criticises the newspaper-writers or politicians and puts forward different ideas, at once arouses their angry feelings and they proceed to call him a traitor.

The one thing, however, that really matters is the *truth*, whether it be pleasant or unpleasant. Anyone, after a moment's reflection, must, I think, agree that it is far more important to recognise the actual facts than to enjoy temporary peace of mind and the respect of one's fellows when the latter happen to be in error. Sooner or later sorrow, trouble, or failure in one form or another are bound to overtake those who prefer to believe falsehoods,

no matter how comforting those falsehoods at the time may be.

It is well to remember that the propaganda agencies of all countries at war, our own included, act on the assumption that the end justifies the means, the end being victory for their side. Consequently if a lie or a half-truth seems likely to keep up the war spirit, they will not hesitate to tell one; neither will they hesitate to mislead people by suppressing the truth.

The amount of lying in which the propaganda of a country at war indulges depends on three things; the course the war is taking; the intelligence of the people; and the intelligence of the propaganda agents. The worse the war is going the harder will the propaganda agents lie to keep up the spirits of the people. Only those reverses will be admitted which cannot be hidden and successes will be greatly exaggerated.

A very stupid people, credulous and short of memory, will encourage more lying on the part of their propaganda agents than one which is critical and intelligent.

A clever propaganda agent, other things being equal, will tell fewer lies than a foolish one who aims only at keeping his readers or hearers in a good humour for the time being. A clever propaganda agent knows that truth, if helpful to his side, is better propaganda than lies, especially if his opponent be lying rather recklessly. In consequence, he will have recourse to falsehood sparingly and he will keep an eye on the future. As far as possible he will tell only lies which are unlikely to be found out and, if things are going badly for his side, he will prefer to minimise the effect by reporting reverses as briefly as possible, rather than by inventing or exaggerating victories.

The three chief war propaganda agents in this country are the political speakers, the Press and the B.B.C.

There are, of course, a few good and upright men in Parliament, but the great majority, unfortunately, are foolish or corrupt and are the docile instruments of the Party Whips from whom they hope to receive advancement and desirable posts.

People should not forget that the mere fact that war

has been declared does not turn a politician or a newspaper man who, before the war, was a fool, a rogue, or a place-hunter, into a clever and truthful hero. A third-rate man, after war has been declared, is every bit as likely to say as stupid and untrue things about the war and about enemy leaders and people as he was in the habit of saying about other matters during the days of peace.

If one wishes to decide whether a politician is likely to be trustworthy in what he says about the war, one should not judge his speeches merely by whether they are the kind of thing one likes to hear. One should rather consider his past record—what good did he do the country in pre-war years? Was he then regarded as honest and trustworthy? Has he always said the same kind of thing that he is saying now, or was there ever a time when he used to say the exact opposite? If he has made prophesies, have they usually come true, or has he often been quite mistaken?

All the daily newspapers and most of the weeklies publish what their owners want people to believe; what their important advertisers approve of; and, in war-time, what the Government wish the people to know or think.

In peace-time one or two newspapers were somewhat better than the rest, but now, in war, all the daily papers are very much on a level.

Newspaper owners are generally unscrupulous men, in close touch with Big Business and Finance, and they sometimes have interests in armament firms. Before the war they made a habit of opposing monetary reforms which would have put an end to poverty and all its attendant suffering, and they caused the suggestions of the reformers to be ridiculed and misrepresented, while at the same time refusing to allow them fair publicity for a statement of their case. As in the case of the politicians, the war has not made newspaper owners any more unselfish, truthful or reliable—in fact, the reverse.

Newspaper editors and journalists are, for the most part, a hard-boiled crowd. Some appear to believe the dope they write or publish because, like other people, it appeals to their emotions and prejudices and they have put their reason to sleep. Others know that they are writing

what is false but do not care, their sole object being to satisfy their masters and keep their jobs.

Books as well as newspapers are often used to serve the purposes of war propaganda and, if they are translations, it is quite common for them to be "doctored" so as to produce certain desirable results. If the authors are not personally known to them as men or women of sound judgment, readers of such books will do well not to swallow their contents in too uncritical a spirit. The books may be interesting as giving one point of view, or one angle on a big question, but it is necessary to remember than more often than not they are one-sided, narrow in outlook, and full of prejudice.

The B.B.C. in war-time are little more than the mouth-piece of the Government and the financiers. I add "of the financiers," not only because the latter always exercise an immense amount of influence over the Government, but also because the B.B.C. has recently refused requests to allow the discussion of monetary reform, in spite of the steadily-increasing interest in this subject. It is well to remember that the financiers of Britain and America are bitterly opposed to the Axis Governments for reasons quite other than tyranny or aggression. Financiers, as has already been pointed out, desire to control the creation and issue of money in the interests of money-lending and then keep the supply short in order that people may be compelled to borrow. The Axis Governments, on the other hand, insist on money being the servant of the State and if labour and materials are available, they order the creation of sufficient money to render possible any work which they hold to be in the national interest. In this, it must be admitted, they are far more right than the financiers, but the financiers when using propaganda to attack them are careful not to mention the real reason for their hostility, but give, instead, other reasons likely to make an appeal to popular feeling.

War propaganda continually emphasises the utter wickedness, cruelty and untrustworthiness of the enemy and the complete absence of any excuse for wrong actions which he may have committed. This is felt to be necessary,

because, if people began to think that there was something to be said for the enemy's point of view and that he was not quite so black as he was painted, they might become less ready to continue the war to the bitter end and more anxious to explore the possibilities of a negotiated peace—and this might upset certain people's interests or political careers!

In Germany the main propaganda attack is directed against the politicians, financiers and Jews of Britain and very little is said against the ordinary people. In Britain, although the main attack is directed against the Axis leaders and their political followers, there is an increasing tendency to include the people as well, especially in the case of Germany. For this reason there would appear to be more hatred of the German people among the British than there is of the British people among the Germans, a circumstance noted by a Canadian lady who for a time was interned in Germany.

The most prominent feature of war propaganda is what is commonly known as "atrocities," i.e. accounts of acts of horrible cruelty and injustice said to have been committed by the enemy. These, more than anything else, arouse indignation and the resolve to continue the war with no thought of negotiation.

People who are anxious to arrive at the truth and to avoid being unduly influenced by this kind of propaganda should bear various important points in mind. The first is that one cannot be certain of forming a correct judgment on a controversial matter *unless one has heard both sides*.

In a shrewdly humorous American book, *My Old Man*, the writer points out that it is human nature to find accusations more interesting than explanations. Most people like listening to accusations because they hope they are true but dislike hearing explanations because they do not care to have this hope weakened. He goes on to suggest that justice would be better served if every accusation could be preceded by the accused person's explanation.

If a person's actions are under criticism, it is, indeed, desirable to hear the attack; the defence; the attacker's reply to the defence; and the defendant's reply to that

reply. No matter how damning the evidence against a person may seem to be and no matter how trustworthy his accusers, it is nearly always astonishing how different the case appears when the accused has been allowed to give his explanation. Most people seem to go through life without ever learning the important lesson of the need for hearing both sides, but I would most strongly urge those who have not yet learned it to try without delay a few experiments among their own acquaintances. I can guarantee that they will find the results more than interesting.

In war, unfortunately, it is difficult and often quite impossible to hear both sides and for this reason wise men are sparing of the formation of any but *provisional* judgments. Propaganda, however, continually encourages the formation of very definite opinions which are not in the least provisional when one side, and one side only, has stated its case. Indeed, strong emotional prejudice which is too often associated with patriotism, causes many people not to *want* to hear the other side, i.e. that of the enemy. It appears to them disloyal to do so. True patriotism, however, notwithstanding this common and popular belief, never ignores truth or justice, even in the case of the worst offender.

Another very important point to bear in mind is the need for making adequate allowance for the provocation which enemy nations or their leaders may have had and for the handicaps from which they may have suffered. When one is dealing with individuals one may often find two persons who have committed exactly the same serious crime; yet it will make all the difference to the degree of his guilt if one of them should have had a great deal of provocation, or should never have had much chance of knowing better. In this connection it may be pointed out that one of the commonest and silliest mistakes is that of confusing the *excuse* of a wrong action with the *intelligent understanding* of how it came to be committed; or the *defence* of a crime with a *fair-minded recognition of the provocation* received by the person who has committed it. Propaganda, however, always makes a great point of

encouraging and perpetuating this confusion of ideas and bitterly attacks the small minority who are capable of making a wise distinction.

In regard to atrocities, it is well to remember that the men of most civilised countries are not, in peace-time, usually inclined to commit outrages on unoffending strangers and the fact that war has been declared and they are now in uniform does not alter their normal instincts and behaviour in this respect.

In exceptional circumstances, however, the strain and excitement of war may cause ordinary men to behave in a manner from which they would shrink in their quieter moments and this applies to our own troops as well as to the troops of the enemy. If a popular soldier is killed by a civilian in an occupied country, his comrades are not unlikely to run amok and beat up or kill many persons in the murderer's village or locality who may have been in no way responsible for the crime. Similarly, if the soldiers of an invading army find that their civilian fellow-countrymen living in the enemy's territory have been ill-treated or murdered by the enemy in the fever of war-excitement, they are not unlikely to be exasperated into committing acts of more or less indiscriminate revenge.

Again, as the adult population of almost every country contains a small percentage of brutal criminals who in peace-time are apt to figure in the Police Courts, it is natural that if such men get into the army, they will continue to display their bad qualities when war conditions provide them with an opportunity. On the principle that when a man bites a dog, it is news, but when a dog bites a man it is not news, their evil deeds are reported and often exaggerated by war-propagandists on the other side and are made to appear as though they represented the normal behaviour of enemy troops. All the kindly, honourable and forbearing actions of the great majority of enemy soldiers are *not* reported since this would encourage the belief that the enemy nation are ordinary human beings and even quite good fellows and this would defeat the main object of war propaganda which is to maintain hatred at fever pitch.

On the somewhat limited basis of fact just described, propaganda, both in this war and the last, has built an enormous superstructure of lies, inventions and exaggerations, often aided by faked photographs.

The following examples of atrocity propaganda during the last war are in no way exceptional but are similar to those which are being manufactured for public consumption at the present time and not infrequently are accepted by the same people who swallowed the last batch without the slightest hesitation.

THE BABY OF COURBECK LOO.

Captain F. W. Wilson, formerly editor of the *Sunday Times*, related this story in America in 1922. The following account appeared in the *New York Times* (reproduced in the *Crusader*, February 24, 1922) :—

"A correspondent of the London *Daily Mail*, Captain Wilson, found himself in Brussels at the time war broke out. They telegraphed out that they wanted stories of atrocities. Well, there weren't any atrocities at that time. So then they telegraphed out that they wanted stories of refugees. So I said to myself, "That's fine, I won't have to move." There was a little town outside Brussels where one went to get dinner—a very good dinner too. I heard the Hun had been there. I supposed there must have been a baby there. So I wrote a heart-rending story about the baby of Courbeck Loo being rescued from the Hun in the light of the burning homesteads.

The next day they telegraphed out to me to send the baby along, as they had about 5,000 letters offering to adopt it. The day after that baby clothes began to pour into the office. Even Queen Alexandra wired her sympathy and sent some clothes. Well, I couldn't wire back to them that there wasn't a baby. So I finally arranged with the doctor that took charge of the refugees that the blessed baby died of some very contagious disease, so it couldn't even have been a public burial. And we got Lady Northcliffe to start a crèche with all the baby clothes."

THE FALL OF ANTWERP, November, 1914.

"When the fall of Antwerp got known, the church bells were run (meaning in Germany)."—*Kölnische Zeitung*.

"According to the *Kölnische Zeitung*, the clergy of Antwerp were compelled to ring the church bells when the fortress was taken."—*Le Matin*.

"According to what *Le Matin* has heard from Cologne, the Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been driven away from their places."—*The Times*.

"According to what *The Times* has heard from Cologne via Paris, the unfortunate priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been sentenced to hard labour."—*Corriére della Sera*.

"According to information to the *Corriére della Sera* from Cologne via London, it is confirmed that the barbaric conquerors of Antwerp punished the unfortunate Belgian priests for their heroic refusal to ring the church bells by hanging them as living clappers to the bells with their heads down."—*Le Matin*.

FAKED PHOTOGRAPHS.

A photograph taken by Karl Delius, of Berlin, showed the delivery of mail bags in front of the Field Post Office in Kavvara. This was reproduced in the *Daily Mirror* of December 3, 1915, with the title :—

"Made to Wash the Huns' Dirty Linen."

The blond beasts are sweating the Serbians, who are made to do the washing for the invaders. Like most customers who do not settle their bills, they are full of grumbles and complaints. Here a pile has just arrived from the wash."

A photograph of a German soldier bending over a fallen German comrade was reproduced in *War Illustrated*, April 17, 1915, with the title :—

Definite proof of the Hun's abuse of the rules of

war. German ghoul actually caught in the act of robbing a Russian."

In the *Berlin Lokalanzeiger* of June 9, 1914, a photograph was published of three cavalry officers who had won cups and other trophies, which they were holding, at the Army steeplechase in the Grünewald.

This was first produced in *Wes Mir*, a Russian newspaper, with the title :—"The German Looters in Warsaw," and also, on August 8, 1915, by the *Daily Mirror* with the title :—"Three German Cavalrymen Loaded with Gold and Silver Loot."

Atrocity stories sometimes gain wider acceptance because well-known people of undoubted honesty declare themselves satisfied that they are well founded. In some cases they may be quite correct, but it is well to remember that in war-time even well-known people of undoubted honesty may, like others, allow themselves to be guided by their feelings rather than by their reason and they may experience the same difficulty as ordinary individuals in securing an opportunity of hearing both sides. It is possible also that they may not be particularly good judges of character nor very difficult to deceive.

Jewish persecution has been a very prominent feature of atrocity propaganda and it may therefore be helpful to examine this question with some care, in order to see how a many-sided problem can be treated with balance and fairness. We shall be careful to avoid, on the one hand, the exaggeration of the extreme anti-Semite who argues as though the Jews deserved all they got; and on the other, we shall avoid the exaggeration of the indignant Jew with an acute persecution-complex, who seems to say, "The Jews' faults, if they have any, are entirely due to the way in which they have been ill-treated. Jews, therefore, should be given everything they want regardless of whether their behaviour be good or bad."

It is obvious from his speeches and from German broadcasts that Hitler has a strong general prejudice against

Jews. We also know that he, like most other rulers who rise to power in a country which has been through a period of great stress or suffering, is ruthless in his treatment of those whom, rightly or wrongly, he considers to be his country's enemies. It is therefore reasonable to assume that very many Jews have been extremely harshly treated in the matter of loss of political rights; deprivation of income; disqualification from membership of certain trades or professions; exile; or enforced residence in certain districts.

Is it right of Hitler to have a general prejudice against Jews? Of course not. The members of a large group of people are never all alike and each individual should be judged and treated on his, or her, own merits.

Is it understandable that Hitler should have a prejudice against Jews? Yes, very. It is one of the commonest of human failings to take a dislike to a whole group of people because some individuals in that group happen to have annoyed you. In Britain there are many persons who have an undiscriminating hatred of Capitalists, or Communists, or Fascists, or Conscientious Objectors, or Germans, and it is more than doubtful if some of these, at any rate, would not behave extremely like Hitler if they happened to have Hitler's power. Certain Jews, also, have shown this same persecuting spirit towards British political prisoners, urging their continued detention without trial under Regulation 18 B merely because they believe, sometimes quite wrongly, that they have anti-Semitic prejudices or because they are opposed to the war.

Does the fact that many of our own people resemble Hitler in being guilty of unfair prejudice, make Hitler's own prejudice less wrong? Certainly not, but it should warn us against the self-righteous hypocrisy to which people in war-time incline so readily and it should remind us that, in this matter at anyrate, Hitler is not a monster as *unique* as propaganda would encourage us to believe.

It is also important to remember that many Jews took advantage of the economic crisis to exploit Germany's misfortunes for their own financial gain; that many were associated with commercialized vice; and that a high

percentage of those exiled were guilty of undesirable practices—a fact confirmed by the not inconsiderable number of Jewish refugees who were subsequently convicted of Black Market offences in the countries in which they found refuge.

Jews also tended to monopolize certain professions, sometimes as a result of their superior industry and ability, in which case the Germans had not just cause for complaint; but sometimes also as a result of giving preference, when making appointments, to their Jewish friends and relatives at the expense of Germans of equal or superior merit; in which case some ground for resentment did exist.

Certain Jews, with a courage and honesty which deserve respect, have admitted quite frankly that their fellows did at times behave in a provocative manner. Others ask indignantly if it be not the case that those who were not Jews also exploited Germany's economic difficulties and made money out of vice, and they go on to ask if it was right for Hitler to exile innocent Jews as well as guilty ones. The answer, of course, is that other people besides Jews did exploit Germany's economic difficulties, etc., and that it was not right of Hitler to punish innocent Jews as well as guilty ones.. Once again, however, we need to remember that an explanation is not a defence, but that attention should be paid to these matters in order to preserve a sense of proportion and to remind ourselves that we do not get wildly excited and desire a war in which thousands of the wrong people are killed just because certain Englishmen, possibly under provocation, develop unreasonable and unjust prejudices.

In regard to the infliction upon Jews of actual physical brutality, it appears certain that this has happened on many occasions, but it may be deemed equally certain that the extent of the abuse has been greatly exaggerated by propaganda. As pointed out earlier in this article, all nations contain a percentage of unpleasant bullies, a percentage which is apt to be higher among young and thoughtless men. The writer has himself met at Eton and Oxford a few young fellows who would certainly have been Jew-baiters if they had been born in Germany and had been

put in charge of Jews under arrest.

On the other hand, because physical brutality appeals so strongly to the emotions and because propaganda invents or exaggerates this kind of brutality more than any other, seeing that Jewish firms are often among a newspaper's most important advertisers, it is only to be expected that special attention will be paid to stories of atrocities alleged to have been committed against Jews.

In regard to acts of brutality ordered by German officials in conquered or occupied countries, it is reasonable to assume that Germany, like other States, possesses a minority of officials who are harsh and oppressive. Reliable evidence, however, seems to indicate that the German Government in general allows the conquered or occupied countries to be administered largely by their own citizens. This is only commonsense as it would be to their obvious advantage not to upset the life of a country more than necessary and to keep the people reasonably contented and willing to go on with their ordinary work.

Shortness of memory is a thing to be avoided where propaganda is concerned. People whose war-time feelings dispose them to believe everything that certain newspapers or certain politicians tell them, should not forget previous occasions when these propaganda agents deceived them or made false prophecies. It is amusing to read some of the old headlines in popular daily papers, from which too many people are content to get their opinions. "Why Russia Cannot Fight." "Singapore Is Impregnable." "Why France Must Win." "Japan Will Keep Out." "There Will Be No War This Year" (1939). If any one has led you up the garden path once, it is surely a good plan to be on your guard on future occasions, remembering that things which are nice to believe are not necessarily, for that reason, always true!

Some individuals, especially women, will read an article like this one and for a few hours be somewhat impressed; but directly next morning's paper comes in with its dose of victory talk and atrocity stories, back they go to where they were before because they are letting themselves be

governed entirely by their feelings and not by their intelligence.

The question may not unnaturally be asked "If propaganda be so very unreliable, how are we to know what to believe?" In war-time accurate information is certainly not easy to come by, but this fact does not justify us in accepting without reserve that which is inaccurate. It is better to maintain a critical and open mind. Some idea of the general trend of events may of course be gathered by a careful and intelligent examination of the frequently conflicting war propaganda of all the belligerent Powers, but by far the most reliable information is that which may occasionally be obtained through direct contact with observant and fair-minded British subjects or citizens of neutral countries who have lived or travelled in the Axis States shortly before the war, or who, for some reason or other, have been in enemy, occupied, or neutral countries during the war but by some means have been enabled to get back to England. The views of such people, if they are really truthful and sensible, are worth a hundred newspaper articles, propaganda books, politicians' speeches, or statements from the B.B.C. Some information of value can also be obtained from people with relatives living abroad who, in spite of obvious difficulties and restrictions, are still occasionally able to send news through the Red Cross.

The general impression of the real state of affairs which the writer, up to November, 1942, has been able to gather from such sources as have just been indicated, is as follows.

Where the inhabitants do not cause trouble, or resort to violence, the treatment they usually receive from the Germans, is, everything considered, fairly good and the treatment of prisoners is also good. When the inhabitants of a conquered or occupied country do resort to any form of crime or violence, the punishment they get is exceedingly severe and the innocent are apt to suffer with the guilty. For example, a Polish officer told a friend of the writer that the treatment of Polish peasants was good and that they are more prosperous now than formerly. The urban population were also not interfered with as long as they gave no

trouble; but if they did give trouble, the punishment was ruthless. The officer's own brother lost his life because he happened to be in an inn at a time when a Pole entered and killed a German. All the men in the inn were immediately arrested and shot.

Propaganda has, of course, described wholesale massacres of Poles by the Germans. It is probable that in the early days of the war atrocities were committed by Poles against Germans resident in Poland and these, when discovered by German soldiers, provoked counter-atrocities. Reference has already been made to the common human failing of conceiving a violent prejudice against a whole group, race, or class. Among the more primitive peoples of Eastern Europe these outbursts of race-hatred are common both in peace and war. The *Manchester Guardian* some years ago described the Poles' treatment of the Ukrainians as "one of the most frightful atrocities of modern times." A friend of the writer's has seen Poles mowing down Jews with machine-guns as they came out of their Synagogue; and the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1922) contains an account of acts of terrorism and violence committed against Germans by Poles when Polish boundary questions were being settled in 1920. It is therefore highly probable that when passions were again inflamed by the outbreak of the war widespread attacks were made against Germans living in Poland and it is certain that many Germans are convinced that these took place. Our own propaganda, of course, for obvious reasons, would be careful not to mention any misconduct by Poles.

Much comment and indignation has been aroused by the execution of hostages by the German authorities. Reports from a French source indicate that the number of persons put to death is considerably less than our propaganda has suggested and that a careful selection was made from among those who were believed by the Germans to be concerned with acts of violence, even though definite proof was not available.

While very severe in their punishment of crime committed by citizens of occupied countries, it would appear that German officers are often equally severe in punishing

criminal acts committed by their own men. German soldiers have been shot for looting in France and in the Channel Islands a German soldier was shot for assaulting a woman.

The exploitation of conquered or occupied areas by Germany appears to have been severe, but not more severe than is common under war conditions and there is reason to believe that in many cases the German authorities have done a good deal to promote the development of the productive resources of conquered or occupied countries.

In order to deal with the problem of racial minorities living in areas where they are unpopular with the majority of the population and also in order to deal with what they conceive to be the Jewish problem, the German Government appear to have organised very extensive movements of populations. In some cases the men have been separated from their families, an arrangement which no doubt causes intense hardship and mental suffering, although sufficient information is not available to judge whether the plan is wholly inhumane in intention. It is not improbable that this separation of families has encouraged the belief that far larger numbers of people who have been lost sight of, are dead, than really happens to be the case.

With regard to Japan, the most reliable information seems to indicate that the general treatment of white prisoners and civilians has been good, sometimes very good. The treatment of the Chinese, on the other hand, often leaves much to be desired. Commercial exploitation is frequently ruthless and unfair; deliberate encouragement has been given to the sale of drugs, and assaults on Chinese women by Japanese soldiers are frequent. Information as to Japanese treatment of the other coloured peoples of Asia appears to be scanty.

The treatment of prisoners and interned persons by the Italians is reported to be very satisfactory.

The idea that the people of the conquered and occupied countries are looking hopefully to the Allies to deliver them, does not appear to be founded on fact. The vast majority believe that neither side can win and "Perfidious Albion" is a common sentiment about Britain. In France

there is hardly any hatred of the Germans among the ordinary French people.

In Germany there seems to be good evidence that the people are very war-weary, but desire for peace is not usually accompanied by opposition to Hitler, nor is there the slightest evidence of any readiness to make an unconditional surrender.

War propaganda, in that it often seeks to prostitute man's noblest emotions to the basest methods and concealed ends, is one of the most repellent phenomena in human history. Future generations may well stand aghast at the folly of those who believe it; the wickedness of those who order it; and the combined folly and wickedness of those by whom it is manufactured and distributed.

War propaganda is closely linked with the strange failure of the average man or woman to understand human nature and to exercise the gift of imagination in the intelligent handling of fellow human beings. Wise diplomacy based on such an intelligent understanding of human nature and united with a willingness to treat other nations as we ourselves should like to be treated could in a very short time restore peace to this suffering world and, what is more, maintain it. At present, however, emotion takes the place of reason and hatred takes the place of understanding, as the poison of propaganda saps ever more completely the moral and spiritual energy of man.

Printed and Published by
The Strickland Press 104 George St.,
Glasgow C.1.
